

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are cancelled following the restriction requirement and subject to Applicants' right to pursue the claims in a divisional application.

Claim 18 is amended to recite that Applicants' method includes reacting a titanium salt with an alcohol to form a titanium alkoxide; reacting a zirconium salt with an alcohol to form a zirconium alkoxide; and mixing the titanium alkoxide and the zirconium alkoxide to form an organometallic precursor, steps originally recited in claim 20, now cancelled. Claim 18 is further amended to more particularly point out that the method includes decomposing the organometallic precursor to form a solid solution characterized by a zirconium-titanium oxide, as described at paragraphs 0017 and 0025; and adding a precious metal to the solid solution to form the catalyst, as described at paragraphs 0025, 0031 and 0033.

The dependency of claim 21 is corrected following the cancellation of the intervening claim. Also, claims 21 and 22 are amended to refer to the organometallic precursor in claim 18, upon which they depend.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC § 112

Claims 18, 19, 22-24 and 26-27 were rejected under 35 USC § 112 as indefinite.

In response, claim 18 is amended to more particularly point out that the solid solution is characterized by a zirconium-titanium oxide and to call for the step of impregnating the solid solution with a precious metal.

No grounds were given for the rejection of the dependent claims, and it is believed

that they were rejected as depending upon a rejected base claim.

In view of the amendments, it is requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection based upon Hori et al.

Claims 18, 19, 22 and 25-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,649,731, issued to Hori et al. in 2003.

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Hori et al.

Claim 27 is dependent upon claim 18. In view of the amendments to claim 18, it is believed that the rejections may be addressed together.

Claim 18 is directed to Applicants' method that includes mixing titanium alkoxide and zirconium alkoxide to form an organometallic precursor, decomposing the precursor to form a solid solution of zirconium-titanium oxide, and adding a precious metal to the solid solution to form the catalyst. Hori et al. discloses organic compounds containing titanium, co. 2, lines 38-41. Nothing in Hori et al. points to a catalyst formed by decomposing a mixture of titanium and zirconium alkoxides to a solid solution, and adding a precious metal. Thus, Hori et al. does not anticipate, or even suggest, Applicants' method in claim 18.

Claims 19, 21, 22-24, and 25-27 are dependent upon claim 18 and so not taught or suggested by Hori et al. at least for the reasons set forth with regard to that claim.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of the claims based upon Hori et al. be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that the claims be allowed.

Conclusion

It is believed, in view of the amendments and remarks herein, that all grounds of rejection of the claims have been addressed and overcome, and that all claims are in condition for allowance. If it would further prosecution of the application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the phone number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 50-0831.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas D. Fekete", written over a horizontal line.

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